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Special edition: 2014-2015 Wartburg College cost break down

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WARTBURG TRUMPET

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TOO MUCH?

President Colson addresses student concerns about rising costs and breaks down the budget

The college recently announced a 4.97 percent cost increase for the 2014-15 school year. Editor-in-Chief Kristin Canning sat down with President Darrel Colson to clarify where these costs are being spent and how the budget is developed.

Q: Tuition has been rising yearly and at a higher rate than inflation. Why is that?

A: It's because our expenses are higher than inflation as well. The inflation number, CPI, we call it, consumer price index, is the standard number, and certain things are taken out of the CPI so it would stay consistent over many decades for governments and businesses to use as a benchmark or standard so that they can moderate. Primarily the Federal Reserve likes to use it a lot for its work. But when you look at the college's finances, we have some major cost items that increase every year, the largest of which is financial aid. Just as tuition rises faster than the inflation rate, the CPI rate, so too does the financial aid that we give to students. Both of those move in lock-step.

Q: Financial aid is where most of the budget is spent. Couldn't we stop increasing financial aid if we stopped increasing the cost to attend Wartburg?

A: It doesn't really work that way because in the college stream we would have four classes, and so what happens at Wartburg, as with 99.9 percent of other colleges, is that when we're building a first-year class what we're trying to do is create financial aid packages that actually will help the incoming students, both match the incoming students' need and merit, and will be built in such a way that it enables the incoming students to graduate on time in four years. So that's what we're trying to think about.

Q: Financial aid packages stay the same as tuition increases, so doesn't that devalue students' financial aid packages throughout college?

A: It seems that way, but to go back to what I was trying to say earlier, and this is hard when you're a student and you're making month-to-month bills, or your parents are making month-to-month bills, it's hard to imagine the way we're calculating it. We're calculating over a four-year period. What we're doing is building a financial aid package in the spring or late winter of your high school senior year. We built a financial aid package that we thought would help you graduate in four years. We knew that your tuition price would rise, but we tried to build a package that would enable you to graduate in four years.

Q: So you're saying when you plan the financial aid packages, it's based on having a tuition increase for each year?

A: Yes, we would anticipate that each year.

Q: Will there ever be a tuition freeze and what are the advantages and disadvantages of that?

A: The main advantage would be a one-time publicity stunt of being able to say well we froze tuition. And every once in a while you'll see a school that does that. What happens at those schools though is that it generally only happens for a short-term, like a year or two years, and then they very quickly get back into the kind of formula we're using all the time anyway. The main harm of a tuition freeze would be, as I said, if we froze tuition, we'd have to freeze the financial aid that we'd already committed to give to students.

Q: Has the college considered any additional ways to make money besides raising costs?

A: Wartburg, like many colleges, is constantly looking for opportunities. So I'll give you a couple of examples that we do. One of the main examples is the partnership we entered into with the city with the Wartburg-Waverly fitness center, "The W." We have a lot of members of the community that join at that center and of course they pay their memberships, pay to take lessons and classes. That generates extra revenue for the college. We have a lot of rental properties here in the Waverly area. We're able to rent those and create some revenue out of those. One of the nice things is

▸ Colson discusses school salaries p. 2

Visit the Wartburg Circuit for full interview

PRESIDENT COLSON'S BUDGET OVERVIEW

OPERATING REVENUE

$77,415,000

GROSS TUITION & FEES	$56,310,000
GOVERNMENT GRANTS, SALES & SERVICE, AND OTHER SOURCES	$975,000
GIFTS & GRANTS	$2,520,000
ENDOWMENT INCOME	$2,000,000
AUXILIARY ENTERPRISES	$15,610,000

OPERATING EXPENSES

$77,415,000

FINANCIAL AID	$28,925,000
SALARY AND BENEFITS	$26,080,000
PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT	$7,100,000
STUDENT WAGES	$2,005,000
ELECTRIC & NATURAL GAS	$1,550,000
DEBT SERVICE	$4,965,000
CAPITAL PROJECTS	$960,000
EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY	$1,535,000
AUXILIARY ENTERPRISES	$4,295,000

— **Charles Kunene**/*TRUMPET*

Taylor Jacob , like many Wartburg students, has an on campus job. Jacobs is a barista in the Konditorei. — **Ta'Mone Williams**/*TRUMPET*

Students feeling the pinch

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When sophomore Colyn Snyder opened his laptop on Jan. 31, he said he could not believe what he saw in an email from the business office.

The email informed students that the total cost of attending Wartburg will go up 4.97 percent next year. Several students said they are feeling the pinch of the new expenses, and are taking more jobs or even transferring for relief.

"I think it's kind of ridiculous, to be honest. I thought we already pay enough to go here," Snyder said.

Snyder said he already feels the impact of the new total cost because he will need to work more in his hometown of Cedar Rapids to pay the difference.

Freshman Caleb Milius was also unhappy when he first read the email regarding the increase. Milius said he too will need to work extra jobs to make up the money.

Milius works at the Wartburg Bookstore and also has four other jobs off campus. Being the youngest of six in his family, he said his parents do not finance his college education.

"Instead of being able to have a vacation over the summer, I will probably work the entire time, which is expected for some people," Milius said.

Milius said it wasn't easy for him to hear from other students who have been going to Wartburg for a couple years that tuition has been going up consistently.

"That's tough to think about it as a first year student. Where is it going to go from here?" Milius said.

"I did not anticipate that it was going to jump this much or this consistently," he said.

Milius said he was aware there was a possibility that tuition would increase, but the amount of the increase surprised him.

With the rising total cost, Milius

▸ Students pick up extra jobs p. 2

Students speak up

Price worth it for some students

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Bailey Wilson said Wartburg is still worth it after the 4.97 percent total cost increase because of the education. — **Sports Information**

For third-year Bailey Wilson, Wartburg is still worth it despite a 4.97 percent rise in total cost for the 2014-15 school year.

The 2013 Capital One First-Team All-American and AVCA All-Region middle hitter thinks the opportunity to play volleyball while receiving a college education is worth the increase in costs.

"If you can make it work and you think a Wartburg education is of value to you, then you should come here," Wilson said. "I decided I wanted to keep playing so that's why I chose Wartburg."

Volleyball was the deciding factor for Wilson in choosing Wartburg over Iowa State, but it wasn't the only reason. Wilson, a math and economics major, Spanish minor and Student Senator, believes the individualized education she receives along with the networking benefits make the cost appropriate.

Wilson encouraged students to think about the value of their education before complaining about the price tag.

"It's not that I love to see the tuition email that comes out or anything," Wilson said. "I'm just trying to get students to see the other side of things because it's just so negatively talked about."

According to a recent study published by the Pew Research Center, roughly nine in 10 college graduates in every generation say college has been, or will be, worth the investment.

Wartburg's new marketing campaign is trying to get that message across to prospective students. Vice President of Marketing and Communication Graham Garner said after research, the focal point of the college's advertising was clear.

"No matter what kind of concept we came up with, whatever message, whatever branding, whatever tagline, we kept coming back to that question of 'Is College Worth it?'" Garner said.

"We believe that the education they're getting in the classroom, the experiences that they're getting on campus and off campus, the network that they have both personally and professionally and just your own development is worth that," Garner said.

In 2011, Wartburg alumni had a 97 percent graduate school placement rating and the following year, 93 percent of the senior class graduated in four years or less.

Third-year biochemistry major Hunter Pagel likes the small-campus atmosphere, including the 11:1 student to faculty ratio, Wartburg provides.

"You're not just a number. They [professors] know you by your name. They talk and care about your future just as much as anyone else," Pagel said.

Second-year biochemistry major Levi Endelman said that type of education wouldn't be possible without rising total costs for students.

"They are doing it as little as possible so Wartburg can pay back its own debt and still manage to function," Endelman said. "If they didn't have benefits or whatever for the faculty, we wouldn't have good faculty here."

Choosing Wartburg was the right decision for Wilson, and she thinks it can continue to be the right choice for future students.

"Recognizing that hopefully what you're doing here at Wartburg and what you're choosing to do with your major and your life, that you're going to be able to find a good job and be able to eventually say, if you can't say it now, that your college education will be worth it," Wilson said.

Students pick up extra jobs

◂continued from p. 1

said he is concerned about taking out loans even though he had saved money to cover the first two years of his education at Wartburg.

"I already seem pretty stressed out. I really like it here, but I have thought about transferring to somewhere cheaper," said Milius.

Freshman Taylor Parsons thought about going to a college in Wisconsin before finding out about the total cost hike, but now it is a done deal for her. She is unsure how much the total cost will increase in the future.

"I like it here but I want to get a more focused education, and it is also pretty expensive here," Parsons said.

Sophomore Gabrielle Morse is also leaving Wartburg next year.

"I was blissfully oblivious about the cost increase, but I had hoped it would not go up. I can understand why Wartburg would increase, but I am not happy about it," Morse said.

Morse said she already has one job back home, but she would have to get another if she wanted to stay at Wartburg.

Instead of finishing her education at Wartburg, junior Elisa Feldman said she is transferring to a state school rather than taking out more loans. Feldman, who already works two jobs, said more loans would haunt her later in life.

"I should not have to lose sleep and get hives from stress just from worrying about money, at least not until I have graduated and the grace period is up on my loans," Feldman said.

The stress of having lots of student loan debt to pay off is not a new problem at Wartburg.

Wartburg alumni Margaret and John Runaas have combined loans of about $100,000 for education at Wartburg.

When they graduated in 2009, the total cost of attending Wartburg was around $29,000. They had a twenty-five year plan to pay off their loans. Every month, Runaas pays back $1,100, she said.

Runaas said she thought her experience at Wartburg was worth it, even though she needed to take out loans to pay for her education.

"The amount of money I spent does not compare to the value I gained from the education," Runaas said.

Liz Lockard, a second-year, works at the Information Desk. — **Ta'Mone Williams**/*TRUMPET*

Colson discusses school salaries and future of increases

◂continued from p. 1

since we do generate revenue for the college it helps keep tuition costs down for students, while we're also able to pay property taxes on those properties back to the city and the county which is a good thing for us to do. Always you'll find at a college campus, and ours is no different, that the food service that is really designed and intended to serve students, will also sell food and services, catering to outside groups, civic clubs, wedding receptions, that sort of thing.

Q: Will tuition continue to increase year-after-year or is there a bubble that it can't go beyond?

A: I don't know too far in the future. I can't look too far in the future. I can kind of see a couple years down the road. Every once in a while I hear a student use the word bubble. What a bubble is in finance is a purported asset that has a rapidly rising price. The thing to know, the thing to remember, the thing to be confident about a college education is it is investment that for hundreds of years has always had a pay-off. It's not a purported asset, it's a genuine asset. What we know by looking back, we can look back decades or centuries, is that education, though it's expensive, will pay rich, rich dividends. No matter how you look at it. For example, we know that a college graduate on average will earn between $800,000 and $1.2 million in a lifetime more than a non-college graduate. That's a huge return on the investment. When you look at it in a different way, the investment in a college education returns somewhere between 15 percent and 18 percent per year. So there's no bubble, it's actually a very good investment, far better than investing in a house or a car.

Q: What debts are we still paying off?

A: Like many colleges, we have borrowed money in order to invest in the college. In the early part of the 2000s, when interest rates were very low, and it was advantageous to borrow money, we borrowed a substantial amount of money, a little over $80 million, at different moments, not all at once, to improve and remodel and expand the Science Center, to improve, remodel and expand the Student Center, to pay for some technology, to build "The W" in that partnership with the city. So we've borrowed substantial amounts of money on the bond market and we would owe those payments back and so there's a payment schedule that stretches out to the 2030s.

Q: Have faculty and staff salaries increased with the cost increases?

A: Faculty salaries and staff salaries have increased over the past five years since I've been here but not at a rapid enough rate to satisfy me. Some of the expenses as well as some of the revenues increase a little faster than the consumer price index but I think faculty and staff salaries have increased either right at the CPI or maybe just a little bit above or a little bit below.

Q: Have you considered raising student worker salaries?

A: We have a scale for many of the student workers. Many of the jobs start at minimum wage, but many students in different roles have many opportunities to advance within those areas and become supervisors for example and earn more money.

Q: We did some research on guidestar.com, and it reports your salary for 2012 at $250,600 a year. Is that accurate?

A: That's actually a total compensation figure so what that would include is, just everything, everything that supports me, so it does include my salary, it includes retirement, my health insurance and other benefits I get. So it gets kind of complicated. I am very well compensated, there's nothing wrong with that number.

Q: Is that comparable to other college presidents and do increases in your salary contribute to increases in the cost of Wartburg?

A: The big components of the budget are salaries and financial aid, or what we would call personnel costs and financial aid. I guess the clean answer is, does my salary raise costs at Wartburg? Yes. As does everybody's salary. As far as the comparison issues, we have a number of benchmark schools that we look at. My salary is pretty much in the middle.

Q: Is Wartburg worth the price?

A: Absolutely. I share this with students all the time and certainly prospective students, I would give my eye-teeth if I could have gone to a school like Wartburg College. I had no idea when I was in high school that there were places like this. I wound up at a huge state institution, land-grant school, Louisiana State University. But I didn't really have the opportunities that a Wartburg student has. I didn't know there were places like Wartburg where I could learn so much with that hands-on activity that is so much a part of the Wartburg experience. Oh yeah, it's worth it. It's worth twice what students spend on it. It's a wonderful experience.

Choice Tweets

Tuition Edition

- I like how the email we get about the tuition raise starts with "Before we get to the numbers..."
- It's a good thing that Wartburg put that nice comforting intro in the email, otherwise I would be completely upset about the tuition raise.
- At least they addressed the email to me instead of to "Student" this year.
- Sweet. Just got my tuition statement for next year. Only $45,000. No biggy, right? #helpmeimpoor
- $45,040? That's cool Wartburg. It's not like I was already broke or anything...
- Tuition now $45,000. I could buy a rather nice house with the money I'll be paying to go here all four years.
- That tuition bill for next year really put a damper on my day. #ihatemoney
- Wartburg tuition is seriously unreal.
- "Costs rise next year because the excellent education we provide is expensive." Really? Our education is expensive? #ihadntnoticed
- I'm sorry President Colson, but signing the email "P Col" does not make me any happier about paying more money.
- "Our confidence is that you are called to fulfill an important role in life." Yeah, paying off my student loans for all eternity.
- If Wartburg does not give me off-campus housing for next year after that tuition raise, I know they really are the spawns of Satan.
- I want to say Wartburg is worth $45,000 a year, but it's not okay that I'll be paying off debt for the rest of my life. There has to be a way to make it more affordable.
- I love it here, but the escalating tuition has eliminated the "scholarships make it comparable in price" angle.
- Wartburg is a business, they don't give a crap about your education. #realtalk
- @DarrelDColson honest question: if you were a student would you personally agree to take on life altering amounts of debt to go to Wartburg?
- So with tuition going up I think Wartburg can afford ice skates for everyone to go from class to the dorms.
- Wartburg hides tuition money in the dining budget! #BreakingNews
- Now I finally understand the sweet satisfaction of not having to care about Wartburg's rising tuition and fees. #senior
- Can't even express how excited I am to graduate a year early from school. I got over tuition raises as quickly as I could.

Choice Tweets is dedicated to the (truthful?) expression of the students, faculty, staff and alumni of Wartburg College. Want to share your thoughts, observations or wisdom? Serious or delirious, it's time that you're heard! Tweet #choicewords at @wartburgtrumpet to see your thoughts here! You can also submit Choice Words on The Circuit at wartburgcircuit.org/choicewords. The Trumpet reserves the right to censor inappropriate and libelous comments.

Administrators say students must consider benefits

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How do you know if something is worth it?

It usually takes an evaluation of what you have, and what you get when it's exchanged for something else.

When choosing a college, consider some key factors: the time taken to complete a degree, experiences on and off campus, preparation for the workforce and a career, perspectives gained about different people and places and making lifelong friends and networking, which provides a big boost in the job market.

Among Wartburg graduates:

•93 percent complete their degrees in four years or less.

•Nearly 40 percent have completed an academic internship.

•More than 70 percent have completed an off-campus, "real-world" experience.

•60 percent have studied abroad.

•About 98 percent have either entered graduate school or secured a job.

•Average starting salaries are between $35,000 and $40,000.

Wartburg's sticker price for tuition, fees, room and board (TFRB) in 2014-15 is $45,050. That reflects the actual cost for Wartburg to provide its educational experience, and deliver the results alumni describe as "worth it."

But most students don't pay that amount.

The average actual price is closer to $20,000. ("Net price" as opposed to sticker price.) Financial aid in the form of scholarships and grants brings the average cost down considerably. Loans and student employment make the remaining balance easier to pay.

The "T" in "TFRB" is the variable from student to student, based on need and merit. Need speaks to your and your family's ability to pay, and merit speaks to your accomplishments — high school GPA and test scores, for example. Need and merit vary person to person, meaning what each actually pays typically ranges roughly from $6,000 to $17,000.

The "FRB" varies much less, because most students pay similar rates for fixed fees, and the cost of rent and food exists for everyone. "FRB" is roughly $10,000 for most students.

You can be justified in your skepticism when someone says (or tweets), "I pay $45,000 to Wartburg, so why can't I get …?" More than likely, many students are paying something closer to half that.

Why do students choose Wartburg? For one, it promises better results than most of its competitors.

We have the lowest net price of our private college competitors most frequently cited by those considering or choosing Wartburg.

Compared to alumni from large public universities, twice as many Wartburg alumni say they benefited "very much" from a safe campus and four times as many say they benefited from classes with fewer than 20 students. This comes from a 2011 survey done for the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America, a consortium of all Lutheran colleges and universities in the U.S and Canada.

Compared to alumni from Iowa State and the University of Iowa, three times as many Wartburg alumni say they benefited "very much" from high-quality, teaching-oriented faculty, and more than twice as many Wartburg alumni described faculty as personally and academically interested in students.

Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of Wartburg alumni indicated the quality of faculty references played an important role in landing a first job or admission to graduate school — compared to 43 percent of Iowa State and U of I alumni.

In addition, twice as many Wartburg alumni participated in faculty-directed research or independent study, internships, off-campus study, and tutoring of other students.

Students choosing Wartburg know they will be part of a tight-knit community that will encourage them to embrace their passions and unlock their potential to realize their purpose. They know they are paying significantly less than the $45,000 sticker price, and that the value received is actually priceless.

That's how they can feel confident saying, "It's worth it."

Senate calls for change

MAXWELL CHINNAH, LANIE CROUSE, CHARLES KUNENE, JACOB MARTIN, TERI MUELLER, ZACH SOMMERS, CARMEN STEVENS

Every year the tuition at Wartburg College rises to new heights. This is an issue for all colleges and universities throughout the country.

We, as students, are having to make hard decisions about how to financially manage our educations.

Many individuals are running out of options.

You've undoubtedly heard stories, know of someone, have a friend or have had experiences yourself in struggling to pay every semester.

We get a job, get another and sometimes even get a third. We don't have time for homework and papers. We don't have time for sleep.

Then, when we've finally walked across the stage upon graduation, we're close to $50,000 in debt. Some of us are over $100,000 in debt. We will spend years paying off our loans.

We want to shed light on the problems that elevated tuition can cause.

As senators, we aim to amplify students' voices to the administration.

Our primary focus is to be informative and to encourage transparency between all parties.

After all, if we truly value our Wartburg experience, we must make ourselves aware of the problems that exist within the system and call for the administration to do the same.

Trumpet

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Letters to the editor are subject to editing without changing the meaning of the letter. Authors will not be notified of changes prior to publishing. Letters must be signed, fewer than 250 words, submitted by 9 p.m. Thursday and related to current issues in the Wartburg community. Letters may be sent to the communication arts office or emailed to wartburgtrumpet@gmail.com. Please type "Letter to the Editor" as the subject line. Publication is at the discretion of the editor.

Total cost increase is a national problem

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Colleges and universities throughout the nation, not just Wartburg, are feeling the "money crunch" and are following similar trends.

On average, four-year non-profit schools increased total cost by 3.7 percent, equal to $1,470, between the 2012-13 and the 2013-14 academic year according to the most recent data found by the College Board Advisory and Policy Center.

In comparison, Wartburg is above the trend with the recent total cost increase of 4.97 percent.

"Every institution has to deal with that question on cost and most if not all are facing cost increases," Graham Garner, vice president for Marketing and Communication said.

"It's trying to strike that balance between rising costs and the ability for students and their parents to pay in order to serve the students how we intend to."

In making major decisions revolving around overall total cost and tuition increases, Wartburg compares themselves to other schools in the region and conference, Garner said.

According to Integrated Post Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) managed by the U.S Department of Education, even with the tuition increase, Wartburg is listed as the fourth lowest tuition and fee cost compared to the top 13 schools in the region with students paying an average net price of $19,740 per year. Only Drake University, Simpson College and Central College were lower during the 2011-12 school year.

Considering average net price, what students actually pay, Wartburg ranks second lowest behind Simpson College with the difference of nearly $700.

"We're basically in the middle of the pack for rates on the regional level," Garner said.

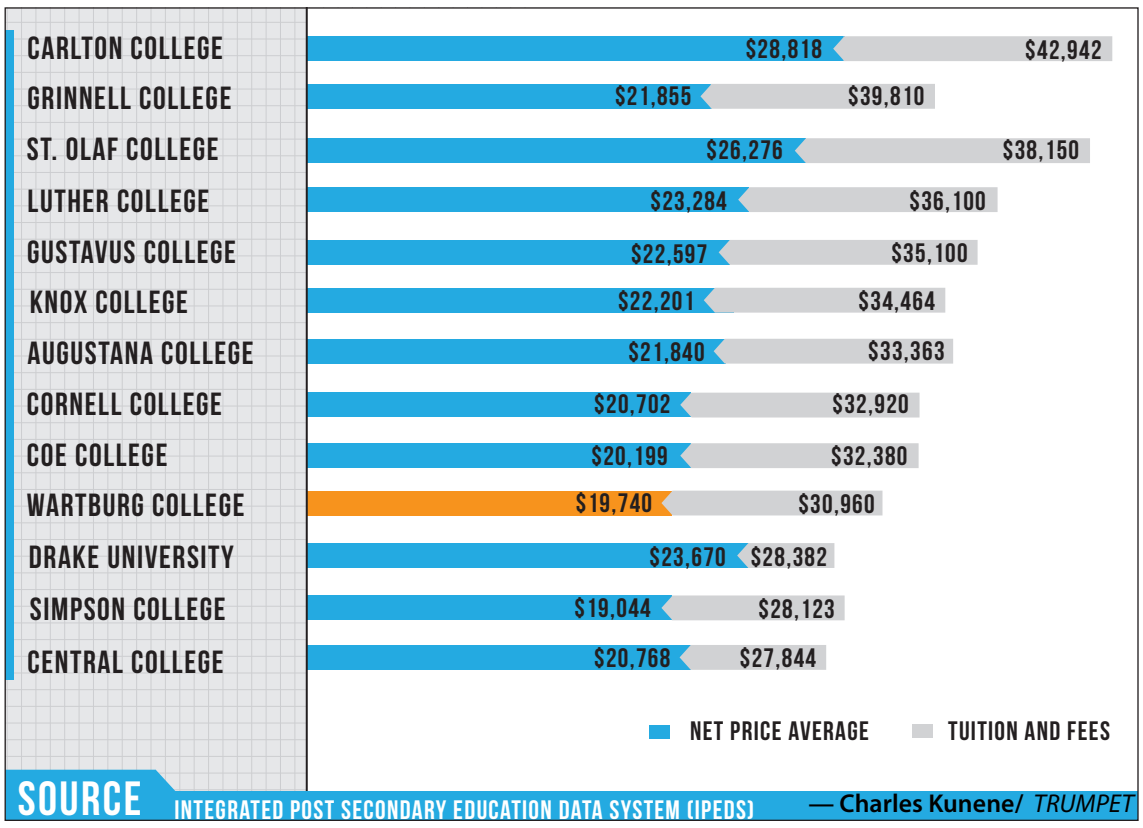
"We believe it's important to compare ourselves and pay attention to what our competitors are doing to see where else applicants may be considering because price is a significant part of that decision."

Throughout the state as a whole, Iowa has experienced a 16 percent decrease in the past 25 years in higher education spending through the state's general funded budgets, Sen. Brian Schoenjahn, Iowa's Education Appropriations chair, said.

Recently, Gov. Terry Branstad requested a $500,000 or 1 percent increase in Iowa tuition grants. This totals $47.5 million to be implemented as grant aid for Iowa private college students by the 2015-16 school year, Schoenjoahn said.

"States across the border are spending less and students are facing a double hit from increasing tuition costs and less spending on the state level," Schoenjahn said.

"As a state, we're all in this together and have to sit back and see the big picture. This has consequences for future economic development and our country's place in the global economy," he said.



With increasing college costs throughout the nation, tuition freezes have been implemented by schools throughout the nation, including colleges in Iowa.

Waldorf College in Forest City froze tuition at $19,266 for the 2014-15 school year, Barbara Barrows, Waldorf Marketing Director, said.

Since this is the first year of their tuition freeze, Waldorf will be looking at tuition, room and board costs each year to decide if the freeze is sustainable or not, Barrows said.

Wartburg has looked at options revolving around a tuition freeze with consultants to see how it might help but ultimately the models aren't very promising, Garner said.

"That doesn't mean that couldn't change in the future. It's hard to gaze into a crystal ball and know, but it is something we are continuing to consider and evaluate," Garner said.

"One thing that comes up is a value effect for people. Would you rather have an education with the sticker price of $45,000 and a financial aid package of $25,000 or an education with the sticker price of $25,000? Which sounds better to you?"

Due to rising costs throughout the nation for higher education, President Barack Obama is calling on Congress to advance new reforms to give more students the opportunity to pursue higher education.

Through a proposed federal matching program, the government is working on a program where more federal funding will be offered to states who spend more on higher education.

Based on the acronym MOE for "maintenance of effort," the intent of the program is to persuade states to do more, Schoenjahn said.

"It's a very interesting concept and a trend that has to be," Schoenjahn said.

"We can't continue on this road and be sustainable in the long term."

Faculty express their concerns on total cost increase

Sonja Lynch

"One of the things that people might do is contact their senators and encourage them to vote on student aid programs. They need to remain robust so that students can in fact get assistance to be able to afford college wherever they go."

Bill Withers

"Historically, we've been resolute about not overdoing online education initiatives, outside of summer offerings, but we need to be more open to new revenue streams like that, regardless of when they're offered."

Ed Weston

"I think the anger is partly because administrators at most colleges don't explain why tuition should rise or why it is so expensive. It's not that the answers aren't there, they're just not explained."

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The recent increase in total cost to attend Wartburg College has sparked a variety of responses among faculty.

Dani Thomas, political science professor, and Bill Withers, communication arts professor, are concerned about keeping the costs manageable for students.

"The question about whether a college education is of value has already been answered, and the answer is 'yes,'" Withers said.

"I am more concerned about sustainable, long-term affordability in a disruptive market."

Withers said colleges, whether they are community schools, private colleges or state universities, need to consider what they can do today to protect both the institutions and future students.

Thomas said the political science department is losing two students this semester because they can no longer afford to attend Wartburg.

One student transferring to the University of Northern Iowa will have to complete four and a half semesters total and will save $36,000, Thomas said.

(Graham Garner, vice president of Marketing and Communication, said not every transfer student will save $36,000. Savings depend on variables such as financial aid, living expenses and cost of academic programs, he said.)

"When they share the numbers it's completely understandable. I can't fault them for leaving. As a parent who has a daughter who is a junior in college and someone who's been in this business a long time, it [increasing cost] is bothersome," Thomas said.

Other faculty such as Sonja Lynch, English professor and former member of the President's Budget Advisory Council (PBAC), and Ed Westen, biology professor and current PBAC member, believe the recent increase in total cost is justified by the total cost of maintaining Wartburg's campus and providing students with a quality education.

Lynch said Wartburg is very cautious about increasing tuition the minimal amount necessary to cover expenses in order to do right by both the students and the institution.

The President's Budget Advisory Council was not able increase the revenue enough to fund all allocation requests on campus, such as grounds maintenance and employee health benefits, Westen said.

"The increase was less than we needed it to be in order to do the things we would like to be able to do," Westen said.

"There is a national outcry over perceived college costs, and we thought that if we raised tuition by 8 percent that we would have a mass exodus of students going to other places."

Westen said that Wartburg is also at risk of losing faculty. Next year, faculty salaries are increasing 2 percent after several years of a salary freeze, Westen said.

According to the American Association of University Professors, salaries for Wartburg's faculty consistently fall below comparative colleges' median wages for full professors, associate professors, assistant professors and instructors.

For the 2012-13 school year, full Wartburg professors made an average of $68,300, compared to the averages of $82,300 at Luther, $81,700 at Coe and $75,600 at Central.

"It's a huge issue, and one that faculty get put in an awful position on," Thomas said.

"You don't want to be a whiner and be considered by the administration to be totally disagreeable and not a team player," Thomas said.

Westen said paying for an education at Wartburg will have long-term value.

"Students and their families need to understand that it is their responsibility to invest in their educations. It's a scary investment, but it's a very good investment," Westen said.

"I have $47,000 in student loans. It costs me $237 a month. I've never paid that bill and thought, 'man, what a crappy investment that was.'"

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